

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2583

---

**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Higher Education & Workforce Education

**Title:** An act relating to community and technical college part-time academic employee health care benefits.

**Brief Description:** Regarding community and technical college part-time academic employee health benefits.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Kenney, Cox, Conway, Hasegawa, Roberts, Appleton, Upthegrove, Morrell, Linville, Hunt, Dickerson and Ormsby.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Higher Education & Workforce Education: 1/20/06, 2/2/06 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Maintains health care benefits for part-time academic employees at community and technical colleges, providing the employees work at least three of the four quarters of an academic year with a workload averaging half-time or more.

---

### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Kenney, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Cox, Ranking Minority Member; Rodne, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buri, Dunn, Fromhold, Hasegawa, Jarrett, Ormsby, Priest, Roberts and Sommers.

**Staff:** Nina Oman (786-7152).

**Background:**

Part-time academic employees at community and technical colleges who work half-time or more are currently eligible for health benefits beginning the second quarter they are employed half-time or more. They are also currently eligible for health benefits over the summer quarter even if they work under half-time, as long as they have worked half-time or more in three of the four quarters preceding summer.

However, if an employee works under half-time for one quarter, that employee loses benefit coverage for that quarter as well as for the following summer quarter.

---

**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

Sections are added to the Health Care Authority statutes that describe health care benefit coverage for part-time academic employees at community and technical colleges.

Part-time academic employees at community and technical colleges who have established eligibility for health care benefits are eligible for continuation of their health care benefits over the summer if they have worked an average of half-time or more in the preceding academic year through employment at one or more community or technical college districts.

Uninterrupted health care benefits for part-time academic employees at community and technical colleges are maintained as long as the employee works at least three of the four quarters of the academic year with an average academic workload of half-time or more.

Health care benefit coverage ceases at the end of the academic year if the employee has not maintained at least a half-time average academic workload over three of the four quarters of the academic year.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The specifications for establishing a workload pattern over a two-year period are eliminated. Provisions of the original bill are deleted, and the following provisions are added:

- Part-time academic employees at community and technical colleges who have established eligibility for health care benefits receive uninterrupted benefits over the summer if they have worked an average of at least half-time in the preceding academic year.
- Health care benefits for part-time academic employees at community and technical colleges continue uninterrupted, once established, as long as the employee works at least three of the four quarters at least half-time. Benefits cease at the end of the academic year if this criteria is not met.

Sections are added to the Health Care Authority statutes describing health care benefit coverage for part-time academic employees at community and technical colleges. An emergency clause is added.

---

**Appropriation:** None.**Fiscal Note:** Preliminary fiscal note available on substitute bill.**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** This bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.**Testimony For:** (In support) Part-time employees are important to the flexibility of the two-year colleges. Some part-time faculty whose coverage is not continued must face the difficult choice of spending their income on self-pay insurance or going to public health clinics.

Faculty would like to see the same physician consistently. The colleges currently have a system for keeping track of employees working at multiple colleges. Adding an emergency clause would prevent another group of faculty from losing their health benefits this summer.

(With concerns) Concerns include potential costs to other agencies, adequate funding for implementation, and clarification that the Health Care Authority is the state agency responsible for adopting rules.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) John Boesenberg, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Federation of Teachers; and Louis Watanabe, Bellevue Community College and Part-time Faculty Association;

(With concerns) Dennis Martin, Washington State Health Care Authority.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.